

**Opponent Testimony for Senate Bill 1
Higher Education Committee
February 10, 2025**

**Bridget Kriner, Parent & Community College Educator
Ohio Resident**

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Ohio Senate Education Committee:

Thank you for considering my written testimony in regards to Senate Bill 1. My name is Bridget A. Kriner, and I am a lifelong Ohio resident, parent to two elementary school children attending Ohio public school because it represents an unprecedented overreach into higher education, undermines academic freedom, and severely restricts the ability of institutions to prepare students for a globalized world.

As I have indicated, I have strong opposition to Senate Bill 1—my opposition stems from experience as a faculty member at a large community college in the state of Ohio. I have been teaching at this institution for more than fifteen years. I can say unequivocally that my work is the most rewarding and fulfilling experience of my professional life. What makes my work so remarkable is that I get to be a part of helping people in my community find a fulfilling and rewarding career of their own—and along the way, economic stability. In my years of doing this work, I have worked with students on their way to becoming nurses, automotive technicians, court reporters, and transferring to four-year colleges in Ohio and beyond. Recently, one of my former students contacted me to tell me that she had written an essay for an essay contest in honor of Martin Luther King’s legacy. Her essay had been one of two chosen winners, and she had been invited to read her work in front of several hundred people. In her message, she shared that it was learning from my class that had inspired the content of her essay as well as her courage to speak in front of a large crowd. When she presented her essay, I was deeply moved and honored to have played any part in her educational journey. What stood out to me most in what she shared was that she was studying to become a Registered Nurse specializing in OB/GYN care. To be clear, I do not teach nursing—I teach a range of courses in the Humanities and Social Sciences. She said what she took away from the work in my class was a greater perspective on the human experience that has helped her to be more empathetic in providing care to her patients. As I sat there listening to her words, I was so glad that my two daughters (ages 6 and 10) were witness to what she said because that is my hope for them—to eventually find work and study that will allow them to pursue whatever career they choose with empathy and a broad awareness of human society. By dictating how and what we teach, this bill weakens Ohio’s ability to attract top-tier educators and students. The success of Ohio’s higher education system depends on intellectual freedom, not political mandates. I urge you

to oppose this bill in the interest of our students, our institutions, and the future of Ohio's workforce. Senate Bill 1 in its current iteration threatens my ability to do my work as an Ohio Community College professor.

Further, as a parent, I want my children to receive the best education possible, one that prepares them to think critically, engage in meaningful discourse, and navigate an increasingly diverse world. This bill seeks to inject political oversight into university curriculums, stripping institutions of their ability to provide a robust and independent education. The elimination of DEI programs sends a message that Ohio does not value inclusion and equal opportunity. Moreover, the removal of collective bargaining rights for faculty members could destabilize our universities, making it harder to attract and retain quality educators. I want Ohio to be a place where my children can receive a top-tier education and find meaningful careers, but this bill jeopardizes that possibility. How would the bill impact a community you belong to? (Your connection might be based on location: your neighborhood, your local schools, your town; or it might be based on shared experiences or identities: "families like mine," LGBTQ students, African American students, parents, educators across the state, etc.)

I am testifying today because I believe Senate Bill 1 will limit my ability to continue to provide students in Ohio with the highest quality education and because as a parent, I am deeply concerned about the viability of my children's future in the state of Ohio. Senate Bill 1 will undoubtedly diminish the quality of Ohio Higher Education, which means I will likely have to enroll my children at an out of state institution.

I implore you to vote no on Senate Bill 1 while it is still in the hands of the Senate Higher Education committee.

Thank you for your time in reading and considering my testimony.

Sincerely,

Bridget Kriner